

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior listings, and versions, of claims in this application.

Claim 1. (previously presented) In combination with a plurality of trays for holding pre-cooked food having been previously cooked in a cooking appliance, each tray having a bottom wall and side and end walls extending up from the bottom wall to an upper rim defining an open top of the tray, a food holding oven for holding pre-cooked food at a selected food holding temperature, said food holding oven comprising:

a cabinet having an interior;

partitions in the cabinet dividing said interior into a plurality of separate, thermally isolated holding compartments each being sized for removably receiving only one tray of said plurality of trays;

a plurality of heat sources in said compartments above said trays adapted for activation to emit radiant heat to the food in the trays to warm the food; and

a control mechanism for controlling operation of the heat sources independent of one another whereby the food holding temperature in each compartment may be independently controlled.

Claim 2. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 1 wherein said control mechanism comprises a timer control for setting a duration of holding time for each compartment independent of the other compartments, said duration of holding time comprising at least a duration of heated holding time during which a respective heat source is activated.

Claim 3. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 2 wherein said duration of holding time comprises the sum of said duration of heated holding time and a duration of non-heated holding time during which a respective heat source is not activated.

Claim 4. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 1 wherein said control mechanism is operable to activate and deactivate at least one of said heat sources during successive duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in a respective compartment at a selected holding temperature for a duration of heated holding time, each duty cycle comprising a heating interval followed by a non-heating interval.

Claim 5. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 4 wherein said control mechanism comprises a duty-cycle control for controlling the length of the heating interval of a duty cycle.

Claim 6. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 4 wherein said control mechanism comprises a temperature control for selecting the holding temperature in each compartment.

Claim 7. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 6 wherein said control mechanism is operable to deactivate the heat source in at least one compartment while the temperature of the food in said compartment cools down to said selected holding temperature during a duration of non-heated holding time, and for then activating and deactivating the heat source in said at least one compartment during said successive duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in the compartment at said selected holding temperature for said duration of heated holding time.

Claim 8. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 7 further comprising a forced air mechanism for delivering cooling air into the compartments, said control mechanism being operable to activate the forced air mechanism during said duration of non-heating holding time.

Claim 9. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 7 wherein said control mechanism comprises a timer control for setting a duration of holding time for each compartment independent of the other compartments, said duration of holding time comprising at least a duration of heated holding time during which a respective heat source is activated.

Claim 10. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 9 wherein said timer control is operable for setting a duration of holding time comprising the sum of said duration of non-heated holding time and said duration of said heated holding time.

5 Claim 11. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 6 wherein said control mechanism is operable to activate the heat source in at least one compartment to raise the temperature in the compartment to said selected holding temperature during a duration of rethermalizing holding time, and for then activating and de-activating the heat source in said at least one compartment during said successive duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in the compartment at said selected holding temperature for said duration of heated holding time.

Claim 12. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 11 wherein said control mechanism comprises a timer control for setting a duration of holding time comprising at least said duration of holding time comprising at least a duration of heated holding time during which a respective heat source is activated.

Claim 13. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 12 wherein said timer control is operable for setting a duration of holding time comprising the sum of said duration of rethermalizing holding time and said duration of said heated holding time.

Claim 14. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 1 further comprising a forced air mechanism under the control of said control mechanism for delivering forced air into the compartments.

Claim 15. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 14 wherein said forced air mechanism comprises lower air ducting for conveying forced air into the compartments at locations below the trays in the compartments.

Claim 16. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 15 wherein said forced air mechanism comprises upper air ducting for conveying forced air out of the compartments at locations above the trays in the compartments.

Claim 17. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 16 wherein said forced air mechanism further comprises a fan system operable in a first mode to circulate air in one direction along a flow path comprising said lower air ducting, said compartments and said upper air ducting, and in a second mode to circulate air in an opposite direction along said flow path.

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Claim 18. (canceled)

Claim 19. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 17 further comprising heat sources positioned in at least one of said upper and lower air ducting for heating air flowing along said flow path.

Claim 20. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 19 wherein said control mechanism further comprises temperature sensors in the compartments for sensing the temperatures in the compartments, said control mechanism being operable in response to signals from said temperature sensors to control the operation of said fan system.

Claim 21. (canceled)

Claim 22. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 20 wherein said trays have holes therein for allowing forced air entering the compartments to flow through the holes and thereby remove moisture from the food therein.

Claim 23. (canceled)

Claim 24. (canceled)

Claim 25. (canceled)

Claim 26. (canceled)

Claim 27. (canceled)

Claim 28. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 1 wherein said partitions prevent the transfer of food flavors between the compartments.

Claim 29. (canceled)

Claim 30. (canceled)

Claim 31. (canceled)

Claim 32. (canceled)

Claim 33. (canceled)

Claim 34. (previously presented) A method of controlling the operation of a food holding oven, said oven comprising a cabinet, a plurality of separate, thermally isolated holding compartments in the cabinet, each compartment being adapted for removably receiving a tray for containing pre-cooked food having been previously cooked in a cooking appliance, and a heat source above a respective tray for emitting radiant heat to the food in the tray to warm the food, said method comprising activating and deactivating each heat source during successive time-based duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in a respective compartment at a selected holding temperature for a duration of heated holding time, each duty cycle comprising a predetermined heating interval during which the heat source is activated followed by a predetermined non-heating interval during which the heat source is deactivated.

Claim 35. (original) A method as set forth in claim 34 further comprising varying the length of the heating interval of a duty cycle.

Claim 36. (original) A method as set forth in claim 34 further comprising maintaining at least two compartments at different selected holding temperatures.

Claim 37. (original) A method as set forth in claim 34 further comprising placing a tray containing food at a temperature above said selected holding temperature into a respective compartment, deactivating the heat source in the compartment while the food in the compartment cools down during a duration of non-heated holding time, and then activating and deactivating the heat source in said at least one compartment during said successive duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in the compartment at said selected holding temperature for said duration of heated holding time.

Claim 38. (original) A method as set forth in claim 37 further comprising delivering cooling air into the compartments during said duration of non-heating holding time.

5 Claim 39. (original) A method as set forth in claim 37 further comprising placing a tray containing food at a temperature below said selected holding temperature into a respective compartment, activating the heat source in the compartment to raise the temperature in the compartment to said selected holding temperature during a duration of rethermalizing holding time, and then activating and deactivating the heat source in said at least one compartment during said successive duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in the compartment at said selected holding temperature for said duration of heated holding time.

 Claim 40. (original) A method as set forth in claim 34 further comprising setting a duration of holding time for each compartment independent of the other compartments, said duration of holding time comprising at least a duration of heated holding time during which a respective heat source is activated.

 Claim 41. (original) A method as set forth in claim 40 wherein said duration of holding time comprises the sum of said duration of heated holding time and a duration of non-heated holding time during which a respective heat source is not activated.

 Claim 42. (original) A method as set forth in claim 34 further comprising conveying convective heating air into the compartments.

 Claim 43. (original) A method as set forth in claim 42 further comprising conveying said convective heating air into the compartments at locations below the trays for flow in a generally upward direction toward said trays.

 Claim 44. (original) A method as set forth in claim 42 further comprising conveying said convective heating air into the compartments at locations above the trays for flow in a generally downward direction toward said trays.

Claim 45. (original) A method as set forth in claim 42 further comprising circulating heating air through the compartments in one direction and then reversing the direction of air flow to circulate heating air through the compartments in a different direction.

Claim 46. (original) A method as set forth in claim 34 further comprising varying the vertical position of at least one tray in a respective compartment.

Claim 47. (previously presented) A method of controlling the operation of a food holding oven, said oven comprising a cabinet, a plurality of separate, thermally isolated holding compartments in the cabinet, a plurality of trays for containing pre-cooked food having been previously cooked in a cooking appliance, each compartment being sized for removably receiving only one tray per compartment, and heat sources above respective trays adapted for activation to emit radiant heat to the food in the trays to warm the food, said method comprising:

placing at least one tray of said plurality of trays in the oven such that only one tray is received in a respective compartment;

setting a selected holding temperature for each compartment;

setting a duration of holding time for each compartment, said duration of holding time comprising a duration of heated holding time; and

activating each heat source during a respective duration of heated holding time thereby to maintain the food in a respective compartment at said selected holding temperature.

Claim 48. (original) A method as set forth in claim 47 wherein said duration of holding time comprises the sum of said duration of heated holding time and a duration of non-heated holding time during which a respective heat source is not activated.

Claim 49. (original) A method as set forth in claim 47 further comprising placing a tray containing food at a temperature above said selected holding temperature into a respective compartment, deactivating the heat source in the compartment while the temperature in the

5 compartment cools down to said selected holding temperature during a duration of non-heated holding time, and then activating and deactivating the heat source in said at least one compartment during successive duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in the compartment at said selected holding temperature for said duration of heated holding time.

Claim 50. (original) A method as set forth in claim 49 further comprising delivering cooling air into the compartments during said duration of non-heating holding time.

5 Claim 51. (original) A method as set forth in claim 50 further comprising placing a tray containing food at a temperature below said selected holding temperature into a respective compartment, activating the heat source in the compartment to raise the temperature in the compartment to said selected holding temperature during a duration of rethermalizing holding time, and then activating and deactivating the heat source in said at least one compartment during said successive duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in the compartment at said selected holding temperature for said duration of heated holding time.

Claim 52. (original) In combination with a plurality of trays for holding warm food, each tray having a bottom wall and side and end walls extending up from the bottom wall to an upper rim defining an open top of the tray, an oven for transferring heat to food in the trays, said oven comprising:

5 a cabinet having an interior for removably receiving said plurality of trays;

a plurality of covers covering the open tops of the trays, each cover having a metallic portion overlying the top of a respective tray;

a source for heating the metallic portion of each cover whereby the metallic portion is adapted to emit radiant heat to the food in the respective tray to warm the food in the tray; and

10 one or more openings in at least some of the covers for venting moisture from each tray having such a cover.

Claim 53. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 52 wherein one or more of said covers are in sealing contact with the rims of respective trays.

Claim 54. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 52 wherein one or more of said covers are spaced above the rims of respective trays by a distance no greater than one inch.

Claim 55. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 52 wherein one or more of said covers are spaced above the rims of respective trays by a distance no greater than about 0.40 in.

Claim 56. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 52 wherein said source comprises one or more electric heating elements located over said covers.

Claim 57. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 56 wherein each heating element is enclosed in a housing affixed to an interior surface of the cabinet.

Claim 58. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 52 wherein said source is spaced above each cover a distance less than 2.0 inches.

Claim 59. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 52 wherein said source is spaced above each cover a distance less than 1.0 inches.

Claim 60. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 52 further comprising a plurality of tray-receiving members in said cabinet, each being sized and configured for holding a single tray.

Claim 61. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 60 wherein said tray-receiving members are heat sinks each having a bottom wall and side walls extending up from the bottom wall for receiving a tray therebetween.

Claim 62. (canceled)

Claim 63. (canceled)

Claim 64. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 52 wherein the combined areas of said one or more openings in a cover is less than 25% of the area of the open top of the tray it is covering.

Claim 65. (original) A combination as set forth in claim 52 wherein the combined areas of said one or more openings in a cover is less than 5% of the area of the open top of the tray it is covering.

Claim 66. (canceled)

Claim 67. (canceled)

Claim 68. (canceled)

Claim 69. (canceled)

Claim 70. (canceled)

Claim 71 (canceled)

Claim 72 (canceled)

Claim 73. (canceled)

Claim 74. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 1 wherein said control mechanism is operable to control operation of each heat source to deliver heat to the food in a respective tray to warm the food to a selected holding temperature, and then to vary the amount of heat delivered to the food to hold the food at said selected holding temperature.

Claim 75. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 74 wherein said control mechanism comprises an operator input device for selecting a type of food to be placed in said compartment, and wherein said control mechanism is programmed for operating the heat source according to a predetermined protocol depending on the type of food selected.

Claim 76. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 1 wherein said control mechanism is programmed to operate said heat source according to a predetermined protocol to vary said heat delivered to said food depending on the type of food placed in the compartment.

Claim 77. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 1 wherein said control mechanism comprises an operator input device for selecting a type of food placed in a respective compartment, and wherein said control mechanism is programmed to operate a respective heat source to heat the food in said respective compartment to a preselected holding temperature, and then to hold the food at said preselected holding temperature.

Claim 78. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 77 wherein said control mechanism is responsive to said operator input device to operate the heat source to hold the food at said preselected holding temperature for a preselected holding duration.

Claim 79. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 34 wherein the food is placed in the compartment at a temperature less than ambient temperature, and

wherein said method further comprising activating the heat source to deliver heat to the food until the food reaches said selected holding temperature, and then varying the
5 amount of heat delivered to the food to maintain the food at said selected holding temperature.

Claim 80. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 79 wherein said method further comprising programming said oven to heat the food in each compartment to a selected holding temperature which varies depending to the type of food placed in the compartment.

Claim 81. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 47 wherein the food is placed in the compartment at a temperature less than ambient temperature, and wherein said method further comprises activating the heat source to deliver heat to the food until the food reaches said selected holding temperature, and then varying the
5 amount of heat delivered to the food to maintain the food at said selected holding temperature.

Claim 82. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 81 wherein said method further comprising programming said oven to heat the food in each compartment to a selected holding temperature which varies depending to the type of food placed in
5 the compartment.

Claim 83. (cancelled)

Claim 84. (previously presented) In combination with a plurality of trays for holding warm food, each tray having a bottom wall and side and end walls extending up from the bottom wall to an upper rim defining an open top of the tray, at least some of
5 said trays having at least one vent hole opening for venting moisture from the tray, an oven for transferring heat to food in the trays, said oven comprising:

a cabinet having an interior;

partitions in the cabinet dividing said interior into a plurality of separate,
thermally isolated holding compartments each adapted for removably receiving a tray of
10 said plurality of trays;

a plurality of heat sources in said compartments above said trays adapted for
activation to emit radiant heat to the food in the trays to warm the food; and

a control mechanism for controlling operation of the heat sources independent of
one another whereby the temperature in each compartment may be independently
15 controlled.

Claim 85. (cancelled)

Claim 86. (previously presented) A method of controlling the operation of an
oven, said oven comprising a cabinet, a plurality of separate, thermally isolated holding
compartments in the cabinet, each compartment being adapted for removably receiving a
5 tray for containing food, and heat sources above respective trays adapted for activation to
emit radiant heat to the food in the trays to warm the food, said method comprising:

setting a selected holding temperature for each compartment;

setting a duration of holding time for each compartment, said duration of holding
time comprising a duration of heated holding time;

10 activating each heat source during a respective duration of heated holding time
thereby to maintain the food in a respective compartment at said selected holding
temperature;

placing a tray containing food at a temperature above said selected holding
temperature into a respective compartment;

15 deactivating the heat source in the compartment while the temperature in the
compartment cools down to said selected holding temperature during a duration of non-
heated holding time; and

activating and deactivating the heat source in said at least one compartment
during successive duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in the compartment at said
20 selected holding temperature for said duration of heated holding time.

Claim 87. (previously presented). A food holding oven for holding pre-cooked food at a selected food holding temperature, said food holding oven comprising:

a cabinet having a front, a rear, and an interior space;

5 a plurality of separate, thermally isolated holding compartments in the interior space of the cabinet for receiving trays for holding the pre-cooked food, each compartment being adapted for receiving one tray per compartment;

each compartment having an open front end at the front of the cabinet for placement of a respective tray in the compartment and removal of said tray from the
10 compartment;

the cabinet having a first row of compartments and a second row of compartments, the first row being arranged above the second row;

a plurality of heat sources in said compartments above said trays adapted for activation to emit radiant heat to the food in the trays to warm the food; and

15 a control mechanism for controlling operation of the heat sources independent of one another whereby the food holding temperature in each compartment may be independently controlled.

Claim 88. (previously presented) A food holding oven as set forth in claim 87 wherein each compartment has an open back end at the rear of the cabinet for placement of a respective tray in the compartment and removal of said tray from the compartment.

Claim 89. (previously presented) A food holding oven as set forth in claim 87 wherein the front ends of said compartments are doorless and remain open during a heating operation.

Claim 90. (previously presented) A food holding oven as set forth in claim 87 wherein said control mechanism is operable to control operation of each heat source to deliver heat to the food in a respective tray to warm the food to a selected holding temperature, and then to vary the amount of heat delivered to the food to hold the food at
5 said selected holding temperature.

Claim 91. (previously presented) A food holding oven as set forth in claim 87 wherein said control mechanism is programmed to operate said heat source according to a predetermined protocol to vary said heat delivered to said food depending on the type of food placed in the compartment.

Claim 92. (previously presented) A food holding oven as set forth in claim 87 wherein said control mechanism comprises an operator input device for selecting a type of food placed in a respective compartment, and wherein said control mechanism is programmed to operate a respective heat source to heat the food in said respective
5 compartment to a preselected holding temperature and to hold the food at said preselected holding temperature.

Claim 93. (previously presented) The food holding oven as set forth in claim 87 wherein said cabinet has a top, bottom and opposite sides, the cabinet being sized such that the distance between the opposite sides is greater than the distance between the top and bottom of the cabinet.

Claim 94. (canceled)

Claim 95. (previously presented) A food holding oven for holding pre-cooked food at a selected food holding temperature, said food holding oven comprising:

- a cabinet having a front, a rear, and an interior space;
- a plurality of separate, thermally isolated holding compartments in the interior
5 space of the cabinet for receiving trays for holding the pre-cooked food;
- a plurality of heat sources in said compartments above said trays adapted for activation to emit radiant heat to the food in the trays to warm the food; and
- a control mechanism for controlling operation of the heat sources independent of one another whereby the food holding temperature in each compartment may be
10 independently controlled, the control mechanism being operable to activate and deactivate at least one of said heat sources during time-based duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in a respective compartment at a selected holding temperature for a

duration of heated holding time, each duty cycle comprising a predetermined heating interval during which the heat source is activated followed by a predetermined non-
15 heating interval during which the heat source is not activated, said control mechanism comprising a control for setting said heating interval and said non-heating interval for each duty cycle.

Claim 96. (canceled).

Claim 97. (previously presented) A food holding oven as set forth in claim 95 wherein said control mechanism comprises an operator input device for selecting a type of food to be placed in said compartment, and wherein said control mechanism operates said heat sources in successive duty cycles according to a predetermined protocol depending on
5 the type of food selected.

Claim 98. (previously presented) A food holding oven as set forth in claim 97 wherein said control mechanism sets the heating interval and non-heating interval based on the type of food selected.

Claim 99. (canceled)

Claim 100. (previously presented) A food holding oven as set forth in claim 95 wherein each duty cycle comprises a time-base defined by the total time for the heating interval and the non-heating interval, said control mechanism comprising an operator input device for selecting said time-base.

Claim 101. (previously presented) A food holding oven as set forth in claim 95 wherein each duty cycle comprises a time-base defined by the total time for the heating interval and the non-heating interval, said time-base being preset according to a type of food placed in the holding oven.

Claim 102. (canceled)

5 Claim 103. (previously presented) A combination set forth in claim 1 wherein said control mechanism comprises an operator input device for selecting a type of food to be placed in said compartment, and wherein said control mechanism operates said heat sources in successive time-based duty cycles according to a predetermined protocol depending on the type of food selected.

 Claim 104. (currently amended) A combination set forth in claim 103 wherein said control mechanism operates said heat sources according to a predetermined protocol to vary said heating interval and said non-heating interval ~~heat~~ based on the type of food placed in a respective compartment.

 Claim 105. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 103 wherein each duty cycle comprises a time-base defined by the total time for the heating interval and the non-heating interval, said control mechanism comprising an operator input device for selecting said time-base.

 Claim 106. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 103 wherein each duty cycle comprises a time-base defined by the total time for the heating interval and the non-heating interval, said time-based being preset according to a type of food placed in the holding oven.

 Claim 107. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 34 wherein each duty cycle has the same heating interval and the same non-heating interval.

 Claim 108. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 34 further comprising programming said oven to operate said heat source according to a predetermined protocol to vary said heating interval and said non-heating interval based on the type of food placed in a respective compartment.

Claim 109. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 34 wherein each duty cycle comprises a time-base defined by the total time for the heating interval and the non-heating interval, said method further comprises selecting said time-base.

Claim 110. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 34 wherein each duty cycle comprises a time-base defined by the total time for the heating interval and the non-heating interval, said method further comprising programming said oven to operate according to a preset time-base according to a type of food placed in the oven.

Claim 111. (previously presented) In combination with a plurality of trays for holding pre-cooked food having been previously cooked in a cooking appliance, each tray having a bottom wall and side and end walls extending up from the bottom wall to an upper rim defining an open top of the tray, a food holding oven for holding pre-cooked food at a selected food holding temperature, said food holding oven comprising:

5 a cabinet having an interior;

partitions in the cabinet dividing said interior into a plurality of separate holding compartments each sized for removably receiving only one tray of said plurality of trays;

10 a plurality of heat sources in said compartments above said trays adapted for activation to emit radiant heat to the food in the trays to warm the food; and

a control mechanism for controlling operation of the heat sources independent of one another whereby the food holding temperature in each compartment may be independently controlled.

Claim 112. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 111 wherein said control mechanism is operable to control operation of each heat source to deliver heat to the food in a respective tray to warm the food to a selected holding temperature, and then to vary the amount of heat delivered to the food to hold the food at

5 said selected holding temperature.

Claim 113. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 112 wherein said control mechanism is programmed to operate said heat source according to a

predetermined protocol to vary said heat delivered to said food depending on the type of food placed in the compartment.

Claim 114. (previously presented) A combination as set forth in claim 111 wherein said control mechanism is adapted to operate said heat sources in time-based duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in each compartment at a selected holding temperature for a duration of heated holding time.

Claim 115. (previously presented) A combination set forth in claim 114 wherein said control mechanism comprises an operator input device for selecting a type of food to be placed in said compartment, and wherein said control mechanism operates said heat sources in said successive duty cycles according to a predetermined protocol depending on the type of food selected.

Claim 116. (previously presented) A method of controlling the operation of a food holding oven, said oven comprising a cabinet, a plurality of separate holding compartments in the cabinet, each compartment being adapted for removably receiving a tray for containing pre-cooked food having been previously cooked in a cooking appliance, and a heat source above a respective tray for emitting radiant heat to the food in the tray to warm the food, said method comprising activating and deactivating each heat source during successive time-based duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in a respective compartment at a selected holding temperature for a duration of heated holding time, each duty cycle comprising a predetermined heating interval during which the heat source is activated followed by a predetermined non-heating interval during which the heat source is deactivated.

Claim 117. (previously presented) A method of controlling the operation of a food holding oven, said oven comprising a cabinet, a plurality of separate holding compartments

in the cabinet, a plurality of trays for containing pre-cooked food having been previously cooked in a cooking appliance, each compartment being sized for removably receiving only one tray per compartment, and heat sources above respective trays adapted for activation to emit radiant heat to the food in the trays to warm the food, said method comprising:

placing at least one tray of said plurality of trays in the oven such that only one tray is received in a respective compartment;

setting a selected holding temperature for each compartment;

setting a duration of holding time for each compartment, said duration of holding time comprising a duration of heated holding time; and

activating each heat source during a respective duration of heated holding time thereby to maintain the food in a respective compartment at said selected holding temperature.

Claim 118 (previously presented) A method of controlling the operation of an oven, said oven comprising a cabinet, a plurality of separate holding compartments in the cabinet, each compartment being adapted for removably receiving a tray for containing food, and heat sources above respective trays adapted for activation to emit radiant heat to the food in the trays to warm the food, said method comprising:

setting a selected holding temperature for each compartment;

setting a duration of holding time for each compartment, said duration of holding time comprising a duration of heated holding time;

activating each heat source during a respective duration of heated holding time thereby to maintain the food in a respective compartment at said selected holding temperature;

placing a tray containing food at a temperature above said selected holding temperature into a respective compartment;

deactivating the heat source in the compartment while the temperature in the compartment cools down to said selected holding temperature during a duration of non-heated holding time; and

activating and deactivating the heat source in said at least one compartment during successive time-based duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in the compartment at said selected holding temperature for said duration of heated holding time.

Claim 119. (previously presented) A food holding oven for holding pre-cooked food at a selected food holding temperature, said food holding oven comprising:

a cabinet having a front, a rear, and an interior space;

5 a plurality of separate holding compartments in the interior space of the cabinet for receiving trays for holding the pre-cooked food, each compartment being adapted for receiving one tray per compartment;

each compartment having an open front end at the front of the cabinet for placement of a respective tray in the compartment and removal of said tray from the compartment;

10 the cabinet having a first row of compartments and a second row of compartments, the first row being arranged above the second row;

a plurality of heat sources in said compartments above said trays adapted for activation to emit radiant heat to the food in the trays to warm the food; and

15 a control mechanism for controlling operation of the heat sources independent of one another whereby the food holding temperature in each compartment may be independently controlled.

Claim 120. (previously presented) A food holding oven for holding pre-cooked food at a selected food holding temperature, said food holding oven comprising:

a cabinet having a front, a rear, and an interior space;

5 a plurality of separate holding compartments in the interior space of the cabinet for receiving trays for holding the pre-cooked food;

a plurality of heat sources in said compartments above said trays adapted for activation to emit radiant heat to the food in the trays to warm the food; and

10 a control mechanism for controlling operation of the heat sources independent of one another whereby the food holding temperature in each compartment may be independently controlled, the control mechanism being operable to activate and deactivate at least one of said heat sources during time-based duty cycles thereby to maintain the food in a respective compartment at a selected holding temperature for a duration of heated holding time, each duty cycle comprising a predetermined heating interval during which the heat source is activated followed by a predetermined non-heating interval during which the heat source is not activated,
15 said control mechanism comprising a control for setting said heating interval and said non-heating interval for each duty cycle.